



MOTOR M2K Group Breakout Stakeholder Responses

The following is a compilation of participant responses from group breakout portion of the July 11, 2019 public engagement session. Analysis has not yet been completed on these responses, but we will use this information as we develop our process and proposed action for MOTOR M2K.

Question 1 (20 minutes). The primary objectives of the Public Safety/ Infrastructure emphasis area will be to provide for safety and the protection of lives, property and infrastructure related to the threat posed by wildfire and tree mortality. What does this emphasis area look like to you, and how should we define this and why? (i.e., adjacent to homes/communities, powerlines, roads) (Note: we are not talking about types of activities or prescriptions yet, that will be at future meetings.)

- Communities, watersheds, trail systems
 - **Watersheds** “area” could be subwatersheds
 - **Subwatershed**: prioritize those with higher populations when addressing public safety.
 - **Water systems**, grazing community, trails, forest accessibility are a consideration
 - **Subwatersheds**/watersheds to define/confine treatment area
 - **Water infrastructure** (utilities, etc.)
 - **Population** doubles in summer: rec facilities are full of out-of-towners, campgrounds
 - Consider smaller/poorer **communities** in risk analysis
 - Prioritize based on structures and **population density**
 - Pine Mountain Lake is a good example of **community protection**
 - Identify/coordinate **evacuation roads** – include adjacent private land
 - **Evacuation routes**, communication systems
 - Start treatments in **communities** and work your way out
 - Restoration of **communities**, not campgrounds
 - When FS has authority, limit new **WUI**
 - Some identified specific locations, i.e., Shaver, North Fork, Mariposa
- Wildlife, critical habitat
 - **Critical habitat** consideration in prescriptions?
 - Spotted owl PACs, important **wildlife areas** might need a separate Rx. LOPs?
- Public Infrastructure
 - ❑ All” **public infrastructure** (overhead and underground)
 - Water supply; flumes, ditches, reservoirs, etc.
 - Powerlines
 - Underground gas lines
 - Public roads
 - Prioritize by importance, and not by Levels 1- 5. (i.e. emergency ingress/egress routes, fuel breaks, etc.)



- Fuel Breaks
- Existing **fuel breaks** should be expanded, retreated, and connected or tied together. Use a network of Fuel breaks/treatments/vegetation projects across boundaries. Folks living in WUI not doing their job (creating defensible space). Cal Fire using/should use the GNA (agreement tool).
 - ✧ Expand and connect fuel break **network**
 - ✧ Note: The importance of regular maintenance cycles of fuel breaks was stressed.
 - ✧ DFPZs anchored to roads, ridges, etc.
- Timber and Resources
 - ◆ **Ranch thinning** of forest areas around private property (communities)
 - ◆ **Reduce brush** – past was chaparral burning. Treat brush first, then burn. Ranchers used to be around the communities. Veg condition conducive to regular burning is desired
 - ◆ **Timber extraction** – need to treat more acres to pay for after actions
 - ◆ Level of risk and availability of **resources** to prioritize 0.25 to 0.5 mile from line – lots of thinning equals big buffer
 - ◆ Strategies to mitigate **non-commercial products** ... more portable biomass facilities
 - ◆ Some **assistance** for private lands? How do they treat?
 - ◆ All hands – all lands
- Recreation
 - ★ **Campgrounds** + Other high use rec areas (not necessarily officially designated rec sites)
 - ★ Ensure treatments reflect **recreation**
- Miscellaneous Question 1 comments
 - ✧ Actions that limit (decrease) human ignitions
 - ✧ Some felt that we were beyond this question and didn't see the value in this first question or discussion.
 - ✧ Include areas like El Portal, Dorrington, West Point (due to be affected by Butte Fire). Include ingress/egress, evacuation routes, wider Shaded Fuel Breaks, the Rate of Spread of Fires, a fire travel distance criterion as the shape (of the treatment) on the landscape, community-sized fuel breaks. Consider low elevation area's type conversion areas as concern areas, such as brush/grass fuels need different (more?) consideration. Include water access/conveyance or water transportation corridors.
 - ✧ Use a tiered system of importance, starting with evac/egress routes. Examples are the communities of Confidence and Ponderosa Hills. Incorporate community protection (both defense and threat WUI zones), areas with high probability of fires, high population areas, locations above canyons, locations below communities. Use most effective locations. High probability location is where lots of dead trees, like Bass Lake.



1a. Is there anything that shouldn't be included in this emphasis area and why?

- Some groups did not really get into this question;
- One person mentioned that large trees should not be removed under the guise of "public safety," which quickly turned into a debate about diameter limits, and then time was up.
- Wilderness, Roadless, Wildlife, Proposed Wilderness, No roads

Question 2. What additional emphasis areas should we be considering? For example, Special management emphasis (i.e., wilderness, RNAs, etc.)

- Habitat
 - Our group agrees a risk (**owl/critical habitat**) are a risk (poor communities) analysis and population density within subwatersheds would be important for applying treatments first, then move outward into "wilderness" areas.
 - Habitat for **threatened and endangered species**
 - **Wildlife areas** ... "old growth"
 - **Meadow** edges
 - **Riparian** areas (RCA's)
- Wilderness
 - **Wilderness**
 - **Wild and scenic**
 - **Wilderness** and proposed wilderness
- Cultural
 - **Cultural** and gathering areas
 - **Cultural Preservation/Restoration** areas (work with the tribes)
 - ✧ Specific sensitive sites
 - ✧ Timing of treatment
- Fire Areas
 - ❖ The **buffer** between these communities and wilderness as starting point to address brush and small tree overgrowth
 - ❖ **Fire restoration** area (move toward being dominated by fire)
 - ❖ **Fire Emphasis** area (areas can already accommodate more fire ... wilderness areas, etc.)
 - ❖ **Identify high risk fire areas** ... areas that might be affected by specific wind events, etc.
 - ❖ Build on public awareness about **catastrophic fire** ... education opportunity!
 - ❖ **Wildfire footprints**
 - ❖ **ID high risk** areas and events (i.e., east wind events)



- Timber and resources
- Need **more inclusive** process. Maybe not uniformed (?) people
- **Road side hazards** [safety infrastructure]
- “**High production**” forests that are still green
- **High value timber** areas
- Recreation
 - ◆ Concentrated **rec areas**. Need to invest more in protection AND education (Education/communication plan)
 - ◆ Giant Sequoia groves and other **areas iconic** to the public
 - ◆ **Recreation** infrastructure [talking about larger Rec areas like Bass Lake and Pinecrest]
- Miscellaneous Question 2 comments
 - ★ **IRAs** + “uninventoried” roadless areas (Rx fire is fine; timber harvests are not fine)
 - ★ **Transportation routes** – primary ingress/egress routes (maintenance, identification, thinning) ... work with partners to prioritize
 - ★ Prioritize **watershed treatment** based on condition (both restoration and conservation)
 - ★ Use areas at **most risk**, then move outward to a buffer area. After the emphasis area #1 (question 1), due the next proximity area or buffer area around the WUI, considering High Values.
 - ★ Then use a resiliency or general forest area. Do **fuels reduction** to meet HVRA goals/needs, protect watersheds. Reflect on the PODs presentation (by Ewell and Johnson, presented at YSS and ACCG earlier this yr), use HVRA criteria, including owl PACs, where less thinning would occur (keep density), but ladder fuel treatment would occur. We don’t need a new idea, use existing to increase Pace and Scale. Use Malcom North ideas, like GTR-220/227 (correct numbers?) and treat closer to PACs.
 - ★ Stakeholder groups have already decided the **lower priority areas**. Connect to recent fire footprints, while opportunity is still there. The Big Hill area’s Oak fire is an example area, on Old Oak Road. Must address the block of dead timber.
 - ★ **Public safety areas** – need to be defensible, use flame length limits, use vegetation retention limited, make them safe for suppression activities, use USFS land to create a circle of protection (or to isolate is necessary) inholdings/private land (include cattle grazing and timber areas).
 - ★ We should tier the amount of **vegetation and treatments**. Use areas of self-thinning (relative density index).



2a. What should be the specific goals or objectives of these additional emphasis areas?"

- **Sensitive resources** are protected.
- **Special areas** retain the characteristics that make them "special."
 - One person emphasized that this should not necessarily mean hands-off, or no management; always a **balance between suppression and maintenance**
- Ran out of time to get into the specific goals or objectives of each designation
 - One person mentioned that this exercise could be a metaphor for the entire project (not enough time to address any of these questions thoroughly or meaningfully).

2b. "What are the defining characteristics/components of these additional emphasis areas?"

- **Unique resource** benefits; unique characteristics; special designations
- There was broad agreement in the group on the need for **active management**; but very different opinions on the tools/treatments to use.

Q3: What do you like about the MOTOR M2K project?

- The project wants to **increase resiliency** over broad scales
- Increased pace and scale based on urgency
- Getting **fire back** on the landscape
- Getting low and moderate intense fire happening on a regular basis
- Collaboratives can **drive funding** through grants
- The project is seeking collaboration (or at least giving "lip service" to the idea).
 - Inviting new partners (CAL-Trans forest manager)
 - Involving 3 different collaboratives
- The scope and scale of the project
- **Thinking big**; the "piecemeal approach" is not cutting it.
- Compliments on thinking at the **landscape level**; multiple forests working together for planning.
- Ambitious/bold: ~100k acres treated/year is very **aggressive; an impressive commitment**; California Forest Carbon Plan will be expecting production.
- Eliminating **NEPA as a "bottleneck"**
 - Funding or other resources may be available for a project, but project area is not "NEPA-ready." The idea of a **large-scale NEPA-ready** area is very appealing; could be great for being responsive to funding opportunities, etc.
- Timing: acquisition of Lidar; CCI grant; and also with the passage of SB (senate bill) 901, there could be a direct line to state funds and a streamlined process (will not have to do CEQA for fuels reduction projects).
- Utilizing the POD concept
 - **Firesheds** as project boundaries, and risks within PODs to prioritize and drive treatments.
- **Prescribed fire** is the dominant process



- **Prescribed fire** in the wilderness
- **Return forest** to its historic state; change the trajectory
- Miscellaneous Question 3 comments
 - ★ FS is doing something new – what we’re doing now isn’t working
 - ★ Pace and scale are appropriate for the problem
 - ★ Stakeholder involvement
 - ★ Likes: conditional NEPA, that we got together today, 1 BIG NEPA project, adaptive management, that we are talking about concerns too. We all agree that increased Pace and Scale is needed.

Q4: What are some of your concerns you have regarding this project? Why are you concerned? What are some things we could consider that would alleviate or mitigate those concerns?

- **Burn days:** how will those requirements impact the plan/schedule?
- **Air quality** needs to change if we want to get there
- Fall burning
- **Prioritization** scheduling/project time
- **Climate change;** is that being brought into the analysis of the project?
- Biodiversity: use of herbicides and commercial thinning
 - Cable logging is very destructive
 - County level forest management?
- Funding and staff
 - ★ How does it get funded? Reduced cost per acre, especially from [end]
- Staff capacity
- Objection/litigation from fringe groups
- **Collaborating with groups and the public**
 - ❖ How would collaboratives keep **actively engaged** with the process?
 - ❖ Not enough time to **allow collaboratives to work**.
 - ❖ Takes too long to get things done – need to **be more nimble**
 - ❖ Not in line with how collaborative function (i.e. meetings once a month or every other month.
 - ❖ Imposed something onto collaboratives as a priority
 - ❖ MOTOR schedule **will not allow** collaboratives to address issues, concerns, provide meaningful input, etc.
 - ❖ “Not the right way to do collaboration.” **“Veneer” of collaboration.**
 - ❖ Feels like **“forced collaboration”**; like collaboration is “being done to us.”
 - ❖ **Not enough time** to talk about the goals and objectives in this meeting is indicative of this whole process.
 - ❖ **Building trust;** meaningfully engaging the collaboratives...these things take time; should not be disregarded.



- Tired of seeing the forest burn up
- Timeline: **very aggressive**
 - There is **always urgency**; the process still needs to be followed. Don't get tripped up with "urgency."
 - Tap the brakes; make sure collaboratives are informed, engaged.
- This needs to **be done right**; lots of eyes on this project.
- Would hate to see all this time/effort/money spent on this project and then have it not succeed.
- How does **MOTOR fit in with SNF draft forest plan revision**?
 - ✓ Overlap between comment period for SNF Forest Plan and the MOTOR scoping period...could we at least push our scoping period back a month (so it's after the SNF comment period)? Personnel in collaboratives are also stretched thin.
- Feasibility
 - Will this project be **implementable**?
 - The magnitude of this problem is so immense; **resources required** to deal with it are enormous.
 - Local logging/sawmill **capacity** can't keep up or double harvest – not enough equipment [ability to ramp up]
 - Huge **investment**: money, work force, local infrastructure (i.e. biomass facilities)
 - Doubling the current capacity won't even come close to dealing with the problem.
- **Performance measures** (lack thereof)
 - What will success look like? What is the **baseline** for resilience? How will this be measured?
 - Is 100k acres/year the right number? Will this be effective? Possible? **Sustainable**? This has to be analyzed.
- **Changing conditions**
 - MOTOR is focused on resilience, but what if there are more large high-severity fires and resilience becomes a moot point across much of the landscape? What happens if the focus **shifts from resilience to recovery**?
- New approach
 - This **new strategy** is not the way it's done on other forests.
 - Lack of successful, **similar projects as a model**: Other largescale, condition-based NEPA have gotten litigated. How will this be any different?
 - Is **NEPA really the bottleneck**?
 - Why does it take ~10 years (post-NEPA decision) to implement projects?
 - Hemlock EA was signed in 2015 and is still being implemented.



- Emphasis seems to be on doing NEPA fast rather than doing NEPA well (speed over quality).
- Or do a 100k NEPA project every 2 years and split the area up between districts; this would allow collaboratives to work @ their own pace and still probably exceed the capacity of USFS and local infrastructure.
- Are there **better approaches/strategies**?
 - i.e. do a “large” (~30k acres) project every year...even this would likely **exceed USFS capacity**.
 - Argument that increasing pace and scale is because NEPA hangs it up, reality is funding and staff
- Timeline is aggressive; doesn’t consider other work already planned
- Won’t be any public comment for 15 years
 - **Reevaluate** after 5 years
 - Emphasize **monitoring**
 - Make the decision valid for 5 years
 - Think about **how long** the landscape may take to show effect
- The implementation plan is undefined
- Adaptive Management is under (or un) funded
 - **Up front** commitment to monitoring or projects don’t proceed
 - Lack of funding to implement – ID funding up front
 - FS funding isn’t increasing; how to **afford implementation**?
 - Bring **external funds** to FS
 - Concurrent efforts to **build capacity** (contractors, etc.)
- Environmental review on huge landscape won’t be adequate
- Not clear there are successful examples
 - Lessons learned from QLG or others?
- **Forest Plan** amendments are unclear
 - Are they shifting diameter limits?
 - Can we, or can’t we, meet objectives?
 - Still in the process of developing regional approach to owl conservation. Would Forest Plan amendments put us on the wrong trajectory?
- Concerned about actions in **roadless areas**
- **Prescribed fire** in wilderness needs to be handled carefully ... Turn wilderness advocates against prescribed fire?
- **Distrust** of the administration
 - Slow the process down
 - Build in checkpoints to **affirm actions** and results are being met
 - Embed **collaborative liaisons** in process



- FS will ignore collaborative feedback
- There won't be an **active role for the public** to play in implementation; the where and what and details of the action
 - The process for public engagement and FS is responsive to implementation plan
- Focus on **upland vegetation** ... not talking about complimentary actions
- Meadow protection and restoration also tie to DFP2s
 - Consider more than just upland veg management
- Miscellaneous Question 4 comments
 - ❑ The pace of treatments on land where NEPA was already completed. Already lots of acres covered by NEPA that are not treated yet. So how will you **implement faster**?
 - ❑ If most MOTOR's treatments are relying on **rx burning**, then what is your implementation pace? How will you do it? There are air/smoke concerns (ARBs, CARB). What is the **long-term maintenance plan**? Do we really think we can "return to historical conditions" How? Is this unrealistic?
 - ❑ **Timing is bad** for collaborative participation. It's a rushed pace for involvement, partly because the same folks are reviewing the SNF's new draft LMP, SQF's new LMP, new NEPA rules.
 - ❑ Concerned that all **eggs are in one basket** (1 big NEPA). So if it gets blocked or litigated, then what?
 - ❑ 1 Big NEPA can undermine **public involvement**/input over the life of the 15 yrs once the NEPA is approved. Examples are MVUM and Range NEPA (BEH?). These are also examples where STF doesn't choose the most environmental option in the past. Then what is a collaborative to do?
 - ❑ Concerned with **Conditional NEPA examples** told to the collaboratives (briefing paper). Medicine Bow and 4FRI are dysfunctional, & potential failure,s like lacking economic opportunities. See recent news on these. So then conditional NEPA has not been proven to work.
 - ❑ 50,000 acres/unit/yr or 100,000 acres/2 units/yr = not **implementable pace**.
 - ❑ Use **YSS pilot project** plan: this increases rx fire, increases logging, creates 500 mbf/10 yrs within the existing framework (LMP).
 - ❑ If majority of treatments are RX burning, then use/create a **forest-wide RX burn plan**, and don't use mechanical/thinning (or other) tools. Use the YSS treatment pilot project.
 - ❑ There's a lack of trust. We (STF/SNF) needs to **build trust** with our collaborators/the public.
 - ❑ This **A to Z project** is not conditional NEPA. Not a good example here.
 - ❑ The table's concerns don't include **pace and scale**.
 - ❑ **Monitoring** component: will it happen? Needs to actually happen. Example: 4 alternatives for Rim Reforestation: didn't happen.
 - ❑ **Funding**: will it be there to implement? Funding can divide the collaborative (there time, there focus), so is it worth the risk?



- ❑ **Capacity:** will we be able to fill key USFS positions to make this project occur. They realize it's congressional control.
- ❑ If MOTOR doesn't get to its end goal, what is the fall back plan? Business as usual? This plan is a two-year investment of time.

4b. What are some things we could consider to alleviate or mitigate those concerns?

- ✧ Solutions: have a **fall back plan**, have eggs in more baskets. Use new Cat. Ex. Categories with the 4000 acre treatment area limit. Over 3 years would be 1,200 acres of commercial cutting. If collaborators agree on locations, they can help find funds. They want something that is consistent with the normal NEPA process, with an opportunity for input and feedback.
- ✧ The fallback plan, or plan "b" should happen at the same time, should happen now.
- ✧ Non-controversial areas - there are only so many **solutions**.
- ✧ What **sideboards** will the NEPA include so that public/collaborator input is included throughout the process? Is there any legal actions to back up these sideboards or if the project is not going well?
- ✧ There is a lack of trust for **conditional NEPA**, or don't know enough about it.
- ✧ Solution is how we **define the conditions of logging**. Do the treatment plan then surveys, or do the surveys then treatment plan? We should write sideboards to ensure good implementation and monitoring. Use enforceable language and accountability.
- ✧ **Adaptive management:** not exercised or demonstrated well yet.
- ✧ Solutions: ensure the **right treatment** in a specific area.
- ✧ Length of decision of 10-15 yrs compared to 3 to 5 years – need a **test period** to make sure it's a good plan. Use pilot project concept.
- ✧ Concerned about DNA: **determination of adequacy concept** – allows for NEPA decision to roll over.
- ✧ Use 5 yrs or a time to complete a large project area or watershed as a test period.
- ✧ On 2 USFS units – how long a time is needed to prove that the **plan is designed well?**
- ✧ Use **renewable NEPA** – like a rolling 5 years? So there's time to test if the plan is going well, or a pathway to include plan adjustments. Example is investment on road improvements – need time to do those, then the harvest (takes more time than we think for the whole cycle), need time to test the plan.
- ✧ Need sideboards for non-controversial treatments.

Overall thoughts:

- There's always a benefit to talking
- Give us questions ahead of time
- Need more detail
- We want coffee and soft drinks!
- FS do a scenario ... projection implementation so we can better understand
- Questions were so general. Can we drill down into concerns?

